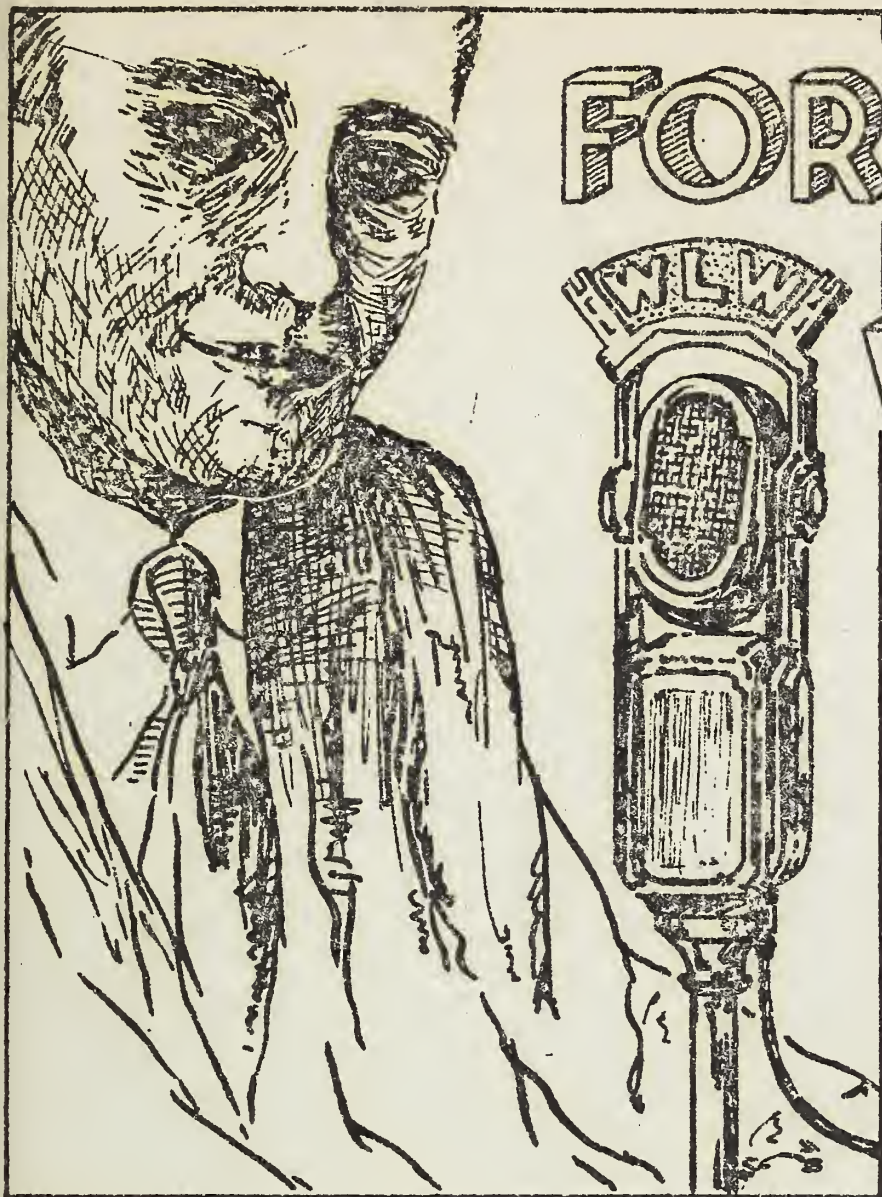


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# FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

A Series of  
Dramatizations  
of Better  
Land Use

No. 138    December 14, 1940    1:15 p.m.

"WEST VIRGINIA -- TREES AND MEN"

**W·L·W CINCINNATI**

United States Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service  
Dayton · Ohio

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949

1950

1951

1952

1953

1954

1955



ORGAN: FANFARE

VOICE

To those brave men and stout-hearted women who crossed the almost impassable barriers of the Allegheny Mountains, and cheerfully faced the dangers and privations of frontier life...hewed out homes for themselves in the great woods, and made the wilderness blossom as a rose...

SOUND: Clap of thunder...

ANNOUNCER

West Virginia -- Trees and Men: The 138th consecutive episode of Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

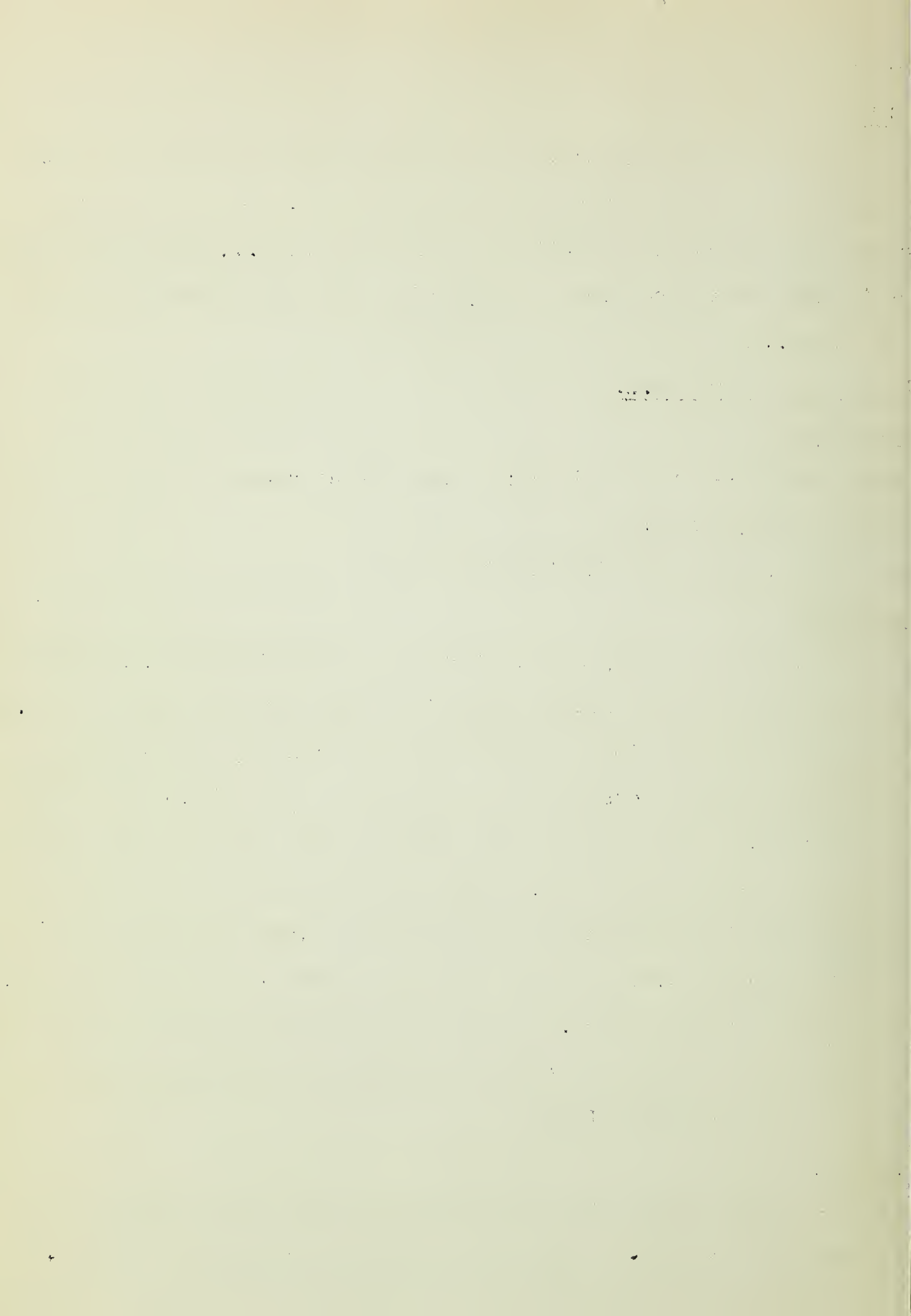
ANNOUNCER

Few scenes are as lovely as the forests of West Virginia in the spring. Then are the hills dotted with many blooms, green foliage. Then come the white bloom of the service tree along the streams; the sunflower-like blossoms of the dogwood; the feather-like bloom of the locust; the delicate wild cherry. Then flourish the golden, vase-like tulip poplar; the long, light-brown bloom of the chestnut; the bright red shumate and the burning bush; the crab-apple with its crimson covering and delicate perfume -- and amid them all, the modest natural flowers. These are the West Virginia forests -- a many-colored carpet of nature's own weaving.

ORGAN: THE WEST VIRGINIA HILLS.

ANNOUNCER

In 1764, John Simpson settled on the West Fork River, where Clarksburg now stands. This was a wilderness -- and he liked it.



SOUND: Crackling fire...

SOUND: Dog barks...

SIMPSON

Easy, there, Buck. You want to go hunting, huh? Well, old boy, just as soon as we get these bullets poured we'll be on our way. This cussed lead is mighty slow to heat up, sometimes. But, it's mighty nice to have around in case'n a bar or a painter starts prowling.

SOUND: Dog growls...

SIMPSON

What's the matter, Buck? You smell something?

SOUND: Dog growls...

SIMPSON

Easy there, Buck. What is it?

SOUND: Two men talking, fading in...

SIMPSON

Well, I'll be...

BILL (IN SURPRISE)

Why...what in...

STEVE

Howdy, friend!

BILL

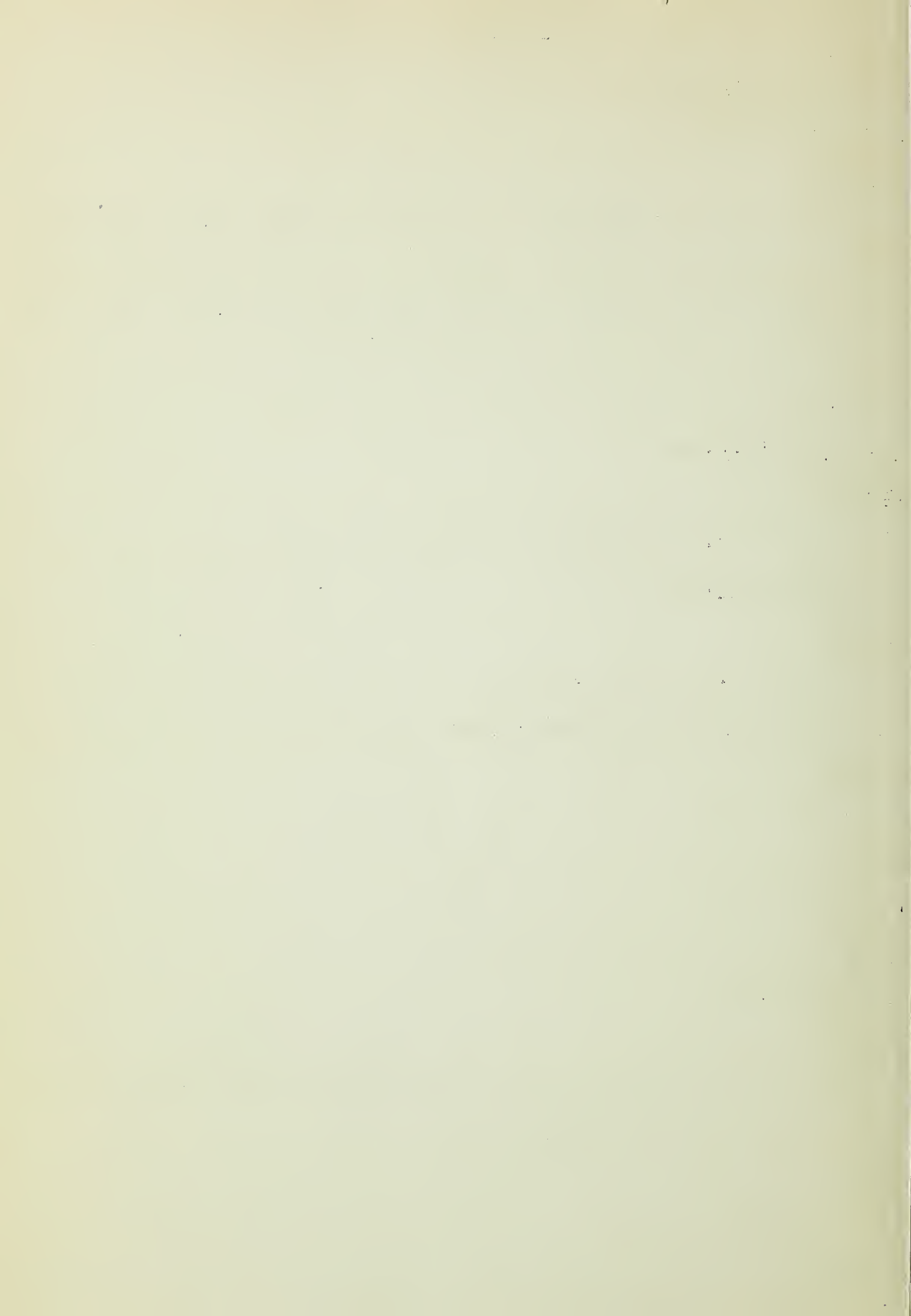
We never expected to run onto a white man out here. Pringle's my name. And this is my brother....

STEVE

Howdy, howdy.

SIMPSON

Move on.





BILL

What do you mean?

SIMPSON

Move on.

BILL

Now, wait a minute, friend. We're not aiming to disturb you, but...

STEVE

You're the first white man we've seen in weeks!

SIMPSON

I don't want no company, stranger. Fact of matter is, I came out here just to get away from other hunters and trappers. There's plenty of land on ahead, so just you move on.

STEVE

Sure, we'll get going, but I want to tell you, I'm mighty hungry for some human companionship. You see, we're from the old Pringle family in Virginia, and...

BILL

You're bound to have heard of our family.

STEVE

Yeah, Obadiah Pringle, he was...

SIMPSON

Listen. I'm not concerned in your pedigree. I don't care a continental whether your great-great-grandmother's great-great-grandfather was a third cousin to some king's guard's sister's child -- or whether you're just plain John Smith. I want to be let alone. There isn't an acre of cultivated land in this whole territory, and me and my dog Buck here aim to hunt and trap as we please -- without any interference.



BILL

I see. Come on, Steve.

STEVE

All right. Goodbye, friend.

SOUND: Underbrush rustles, as men move on...(PAUSE)

SIMPSON (on cue)

Hmmf! This territory is getting crowded.

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE DENOTING LAPSE OF TIME.

SOUND: Rifle shot...

SIMPSON

Got 'im, Buck!

SOUND: Dog barks furiously....

SIMPSON

He's a fine one, too. But you onery hound, you mighty near scared him away. Dogs are all right for night hunting, but no account for deer. Here, now...don't look so down in the mouth, Buck.

What's that? Oh, it's you two.

STEVE

Howdy, friend.

BILL

Gee, that's a good looking deer! Bigger'n any we've got this year.

SIMPSON

He'll do.

STEVE

Well, come on, Bill.

SIMPSON

Say, just a minute. I reckon I was a bit rough with you boys last summer.



STEVE

Oh, that's all right.

SIMPSON

No, it's not right. Matter of fact, after you left I came close to trailing you and asking you to forget it. Trouble is, I've been by myself so much I've grown to like it, and I just kinda hate to see the country getting settled up. I wouldn't be at all surprised if they don't farm this land around here someday.

BILL

Farm these Virginia hills? Oh, no.

STEVE

They've got some mighty good soil in them. We've got a right nice garden ourselves.

SIMPSON

Where's your cabin at?

STEVE

About fourteen miles down the river.

BILL

Only we don't have a cabin. It's just a big hollow sycamore.

STEVE

It's plenty big. So big you can turn a fence rail around inside of it without striking the sides.

SIMPSON

Fences! There you go. Down come the trees, up go the farms, and fences, and away goes the wild game. First thing you know the farms begin to wear out...

BILL (laughing)

Can you imagine that, Steve? He says this land will wear out.





SIMPSON

Laugh if you want to. But some of that land along the seaboard is already washed away. That's why men are moving west. Well, let's forget that for the time being. Suppose you boys come over to my cabin next week and we'll have a big venison steak.

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE DENOTING LAPSE OF TIME.

SOUND: Marching feet, fading in, gradually growing louder thru...

ANNOUNCER

George Rogers Clark!

VOICE

Pioneers!

ANNOUNCER

Benjamin Harrison!

VOICE

Pioneers!

ANNOUNCER

Soldiers! Merchants! Farmers! Farmers! Farmers!

VOICE

Pioneers!

SOUND: Marching feet up, then gradually fade into silence....

SIMPSON

Boy's, if you'll stop over by my old cabin you'll find a mess of stuff you might be able to use.

STEVE

What do you mean, Simpson? You're not pulling out.

SIMPSON

Yep, I'm pulling out. Heading west. Maybe Ohio territory. They tell me it's still a wilderness.



STEVE

Well, now, we're right sorry to see you go.

BILL

We'll miss you, Simpson.

SIMPSON

It's for the best. When you see the smoke of your neighbor's house, it's time to move.

STEVE

This land is changing, for a fact.

SIMPSON

Changing fast, just as I said it would. They tell me they're even going to make a county out of this territory...Harrison county, they aim to call it. Say it'll run clear from Maryland to the Ohio. Well, I was the man who once said we had plenty of land -- plenty of land to be had for the asking. The people in the Virginia country a hundred years from now will forget all about old John Simpson. But, boys -- here's one thing I hope you nor them will ever forget -- take care of the land, and the land will take care of you.

ORGAN: Sneak in soft, marching music...

ANNOUNCER

I hear the tread of pioneers  
Of nations yet to be;  
The first low wash of waves  
Where soon shall roll a human sea.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.





ANNOUNCER

That is a true story of John Simpson and the Pringle brothers, a true story of pioneer days in Harrison County, West Virginia. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thank you very much, \_\_\_\_\_. The hills of West Virginia have changed, there's no question about that. Soil erosion has become a critical problem facing the West Virginia farmers, but like those in most states, they're fighting back now in cooperation -- by organizing soil conservation districts. Walter Gumbel, the West Virginia extension soil conservationist, is going around with a broad smile on his face about that. He reports that Mason, Barbour, and Upshur counties are the latest to form soil conservation districts.

ANNOUNCER

Is there a district in Harrison county, Ewing?

JONES

Yes, I was just going to get to that, \_\_\_\_\_. The district there comprises not only Harrison county, but the adjoining county of Mason. Its supervisors are Carroll Bond -- he's the president -- C. M. Sperry, Manley Curry, Russell Hartley, and Bernard Linger.

ANNOUNCER

And just how does the district propose to solve this soil erosion problem?



JONES

They have pretty much of a complicated problem. Fortunately, they have the experience of a CCC camp that formerly worked out of Clarksburg, to act as a guide. For one thing, they'll probably get away from dairy cattle and go in for more general livestock farming. You see, dairy cattle have to be driven to the barn twice a day, and they cut paths in the steep hillsides -- and the first thing you know those paths become serious gullies.

ANNOUNCER

Would you say they may go in for more sheep raising?

JONES

Possibly, but first of all they'll have to solve the dog problem. And their most immediate job is to do something with the pastures. There isn't much of a sod cover on the majority of them. The farmers have expected the pastures to take care of themselves, just like their fathers and grandfathers did. The result is that there is plenty of wild growth but no real cover -- no "fattening stuff" as Carroll Bond calls it. But if they can get a good sod cover, by careful management, and by use of more lime and phosphate, they'll have worked out the principal source of their troubles.

ANNOUNCER

How about this lime and phosphate, Ewing -- is it available?



JONES

The district is making it so. They're beginning to get in some TVA phosphate, now, and the district is opening up its own limestone quarry near Elkins. Just now, though, the board of supervisors, working with such Soil Conservation Service personnel as Alfred Millender and Bob Amos, is carrying out a broad educational program with the farmers...and as soon as the farmers really find out how the district operates, they're anxious to fall in line and do what they can to cooperate. So you might sum up the situation like this: first there's the job of education, then a work program that will probably include fencing out the woodlands on the steeper hills, pasture improvement and livestock farming on the more gentle slopes, and row crops and truck crops in the bottom lands. Men like Carroll Bond are leading the way -- Bond, by the way, raises purebred Hereford cattle, and his herd, established by his grandfather, was probably the first of its kind east of the Mississippi. Anyhow, I think I'm safe in saying that, as this soil conservation district gets into operation, brighter days will be ahead for Harrison and Mason counties.

SOUND: Telegraph key clicking...

ANNOUNCER

News in the conservation world!

JONES

Here's an interesting item about a badly eroded field on the E. W. Smith, farm, Randolph county, West Virginia. Please,

\_\_\_\_\_.





ANNOUNCER

This field had been cropped for many years. Due to improper cultural practices, about all of the topsoil was washed away. Gullies were everywhere. Yields had dropped off, and during the summer the ground was hard and dry. The rains that fell just ran off.

Mr. Smith was unable to do much with the land. He needed it for hay and grain. Just about that time, the Soil Conservation Service established an erosion control and moisture conservation demonstration area in the county, and Mr. Smith was one of the first farmers to cooperate with the program.

A series of diversion terraces along with contour strip cropping have been installed to replace the gullies that were so prominent. And now that same field is producing fine crops.

JONES

So you see, \_\_\_\_\_, that other farmers in West Virginia are doing something to save their soil -- and they are finding out that conservation pays cash dividends.

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

JONES (on cue)

This is Ewing Jones, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Goodbye, friends, until next Saturday at this same time, when we bring you another story of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

